754 of The Baron, who is one of the chiefs of Dominica, when they called
787 a boye for one of their sick girls [52] and made his devil appear, heard him speak in a very clear voice. He wanted to go in with a burning torch, but the women would not let him enter, and he did not want to insist, since he didn't yet know the language well enough.

The wife of this chief wanted to make one of her daughters a boye, with the help of another boye. But she could not, although the girl was willing and fasted as ordered. The old witch used for an excuse that the girl ate something that she had been forbidden to.

When the sick are cured, they give a feast for the boye, who sometimes also calls his devil to the celebration. The boye and this
[302 scoundrel, if he is there, blacken the sick person with dye from the
386] genipa tree to conclude the farce.

● 754 Some people do not call the boyes when they want to speak to the devil. Digging in the earth where they know someone is buried, they extract bones or hair of the dead person, and put them in a gourd which they plug with cotton. The devil speaks to them through these bones or hairs and claims to be the soul of the dead person.

With these bones they even cast various sorts of spells to revenge themselves against their enemies. Some take the left-overs from the meal of their enemy and put them next to these bones of the dead, which, as we have said, bewitches them. Others put in blood from a wound, as it happened with a Carib who came to find Father Raymond at Guadeloupe in order to be baptized. Since it was not possible, however, at the time to instruct him he was sent back. This man, wanting to avenge the death of his brother, entered a hut and stabbed the one he thought to be the murderer of his brother, but who was not. The parents of the wounded man were not able to obtain satisfaction, since the other had made off. They soaked cotton in the blood of their son and put it with some of these bones, and the assailant was overcome by a weakness that caused his death after two years.

776 Father Raymond and his interpreter, upon asking a boye named
821 Sali how his god looked, were told that he was so old that his staff was all shiny from having been carried so long. The boye said that his god was the cause of storms or violent tempests.

During an eclipse of the sun or moon, they say that [53] it is mapoya [maboya] who eats it (we shall relate in the last chapter

[234] For their children they make
[Cay] grotesque dolls out of it[1] which are called mánlira, the same name as the wood. I have taken some of these dolls out from under rocks where they had been hidden by the savages who had been exterminated. The Caribs did not dare to look at these because of superstition. These dolls were just as beautiful as if they had been newly made. I believe this wood sinks to the bottom of water like a stone. [354]

Caribs who come from other islands are also people of this
[101] nation. [310]

2. Religious Beliefs

754 The Caribs explain the causes of all their misfortunes as due to
776 the gods of the boyes [shamans], or due to maboyas [evil spirits], or due to sorcerers. This is because the first are more feared than loved, and the second are hated. They often revenge themselves, sometimes mistakenly and very crudely, on those whom they believe to be the third and who are nothing less than sorcerers. I have seen an old
[Cay] man who was a little bald and who complained he had been bewitched -- as if people only became bald in this way. [271]

752 The boye sings to cause his gods to descend. When the Caribs
776 go to war, or when some are sick, they summon a boye. An offering is prepared and placed at the back of the hut which is always circular. A hammock is hung. The audience lines up along the side. The boye arrives, sometimes accompanied by a second boye, and begins to sing. One of the two boyes throws up tobacco smoke instead of incense, and by this means he causes his false god to descend. I have distinctly heard him when he falls like a sack of flour, but I have not heard the sound people say he makes with his fingers. The boye gives the god the hammock to sit in, and presents him the offering to eat and drink. This spirit of the darkness hates light and orders the fire to be smothered and all the openings through which daylight may pass to be filled, although the ceremony is always done at night. Once I attempted to enter with a fire brand in order to prevent this abomination from occurring, but the women stopped me. Many other times when I was walking around the place I heard a voice like "John in the Vineyard," which made me believe that there was trickery. I decided to find out the real facts and approached the spot without anyone's noticing me.

[1] [i.e., of gayac wood -- Analyst]

10. Lore and Learning

759 The Caribs have no knowledge of liberal arts or mechanical skills, not even having words to express them. However, they practice them to the extent that nature has given them knowledge, and necessity requires it. They do not know how to open a vein, but this does not mean that they are ignorant of drawing blood if they must. The instrument they use is neither a lancet nor scalpel, and they do not pierce the vein nor make a deep cut. Instead, they slightly scratch the skin with an instrument which they make from
413 an agouti thigh bone which has an agouti tooth imbedded in one end and is tied with a cotton thread. They sharpen the tooth, and holding the handle press lightly on the flesh and make scratches. Then they rub off the blood with ocalloman straw. [190]

[159] [263] All of the Caribs are extremely melancholy, moody, and silent. They have appetites for odd foods as if they were pregnant women, eating chalk, or if they do not have it, eating earth. The women and children all do it, which make them dry and finally causes their death. I have always in my accounts mentioned their
751 melancholy and the difficult nature of their language. It has been
●754 commonly said that the devil beats them. I have never seen nor heard of such a thing from the Caribs in all of the nineteen years I have spoken with them. The reason why such a statement has been made is twofold. Firstly, when lying on the left side their spleen is compressed by the left elbow. It sends black fumes to the brain which causes black and horrible dreams, as if they were at grips with maboyas or were being taken away by them. I have taken some of the Caribs in my arms when I saw them in such pains. I wiped off their sweat and carried them out of their hammocks, and they would have willingly fallen on their knees to thank me because I had protected them from the maboyas who were beating them. The second reason for the statement that the devil beats them is that at the slightest harm they suffer they say it is a spell or an evil given by maboyas or sorcerers. This does not mean that they have been beaten, but rather that they have been sent or given such evils through spells. [341]

378 The value of herbs is not unknown to the Caribs who collect
757 them when they are sick in order to drink as medicine the juice which they draw out. Ordinarily the herbs are crushed between their hands and put into a pot full of water. They rub this mixture on the sick

person, whom they expose to the noonday sun, and let the medicine dry for a time. They know trees with great medicinal powers, and they peel off the second bark and crush it to press out the juice which they drink as a medicine. The women sometimes specialize so thoroughly in this profession that they are suspected of sorcery. They have killed certain women because of these suspicions, although one is never certain of the truth of these charges. [320]

The Caribs sometimes wear around their neck necklaces made of small, long calabashes as big as the finger, and filled with Manafénix meat. Others wear bits of jaguar skin, claws of birds of prey, and other things which they wear as relics, especially at their feasts. At other times they always have some of these around their neck. I do not know whether this is out of superstition or to protect themselves from magic spells, or from an evil, or in the hope of becoming valiant. It seems they wear them for all these reasons and especially for the last two. [192] The Caribs when they are sick do not tolerate married people visiting them during their illness because they believe that their presence would impede their recovery. [365]

The chípiou tree has sap which is so bitter that it is used to designate all bitter things. If the Caribs handle its bark they communicate such a great bitterness to everything they touch that these things could not be used. They pound this bark, press out its juices and rub people with it who have yaws, that is to say, the great pox. I believe that it has some benefit against this evil. [160] They dry a reed, burn it, and rub the ashes on those who have yaws. The stems of the reed are used to lath roofs or enclose the walls of their houses. [361] Yaws is a natural disease which is as common in the islands as syphilis is in France. The Caribs cure themselves easily and without danger, not only because the temperature of the air is very even, but also because of the powerful remedies growing in the Torrid Zone. These remedies were taken by an 1,800 league voyage to France and lost their potency. They use the juice of chípiou bark which they rub on the outside, blacken themselves with Genipa juice, and use ashes of reeds. They take the juice of some vines like the mibi which is mixed with the grated back part of conch shell. When the big pimples burst they apply little tufts of raw cotton which binds the lesions and prevents deformity. But yaws are not very dangerous although common among

755 Often they suck the sick part and go immediately outside the house to vomit what they call the venom. In this way the poor sick person is healed more by imagination than he is in fact, and he is more bewitched than disillusioned. When this ceremony is entirely over, the devil of medicine stirs up all the food prepared for him and appears to be feasting although everything remains uneaten, as we have explained. Roughly kicking the ground he finally takes his leave shaking his hands and snapping his fingers.

776 It sometimes happens that a person summons several boyes, and
755 each of them causes his own god to appear. This is worse than the devilry of Chaumont; for these devils wrangle among themselves insulting each other a thousand times; according to the Caribs, they even come to blows among themselves. When this happen these poor barbarians become pale and are compelled to run away for fear of being involved and becoming subjected to very strong blows.

755 When the sickness is healed the cured man makes a banquet for the ichéiri or false god and the boye does not fail to be there. At the end of the banquet both of them blacken the cured man with Genipa apples and he becomes as beautiful as his medicine, that is to say as black as the devil.

776 A young French boy who lived among them as a slave for three or four years asked a boye one day to describe the appearance of his god. The boye answered him that he was so old, he was all bent and that his walking stick had become glistening under the weight of supporting
777 him. The devils sometimes lodge themselves in the bones of the dead, which are taken from a grave and wrapped in cotton. Oracles are rendered from these bones when the devil is questioned, and it is said that it is the very soul of the dead who speaks. These talking
● 754 bones are used to bewitch anyone who has angered them. This is the way they do it. They take the remains of the food or drink of the enemy, or any other personal belonging. When they have encircled the object with these bones the enemy immediately begins to lose his ordinary vigor, a consuming fever ruins him, and as the spell runs its course the man dies a lingering death. No one can give such a man a remedy for the recovery of his health.

754 Father Raymond [Breton] has seen a man who wished to take
627 vengeance for the murder of his brother. He made a mistake and

killed an innocent man instead of the man who was guilty. The relatives of the innocent man who had been so unfortunately murdered decided to take revenge, without considering that his death was caused by mistake rather than through malice. They reddened cotton with blood from the man who had been murdered and placed it with human bones. It was immediately seen that the murderer began to lose his healthy appearance. After a gradual decline in health and wasting away over a span of two years, he died just as he was planning to come to Guadaloupe and receive baptism from Father Raymond [Breton] who was staying there at that time.

The Caribs have ugly little dolls of cotton, and it is said that the devil speaks to them through the doll's mouth. They throw them into the sea when they plan to take a sea journey and if they sink to the bottom it is a sign of storm and of risk. If they float on the water it is taken as certain prediction of fine weather.

Mr. du Parquet, Lieutenant General for His Majesty in Martinique, assured me that the Caribs of the island had found in the caverns certain idols made of cotton and shaped like men. They had small grains of sea tavonet in place of eyes and wore a kind of cotton cap on their heads. The Caribs affirmed that these were the gods belonging to the Igneri whom they had massacred. But no Carib dared to enter that cavern, and they trembled with fear when they approached it.

Mr. du Parquet having heard about it sent some of his people with the order to take these idols out and bring them to his house. The Caribs found out about the plan and were so terrified that they told their fears to the French who became uneasy, [with the result that] the first two to step into this cavern passed out in a faint. They were carried out half dead and the others dared go no farther. A little later braver people were sent who had not talked to the Caribs, and they entered the cave and secretly removed the idols.

These idols were the cause of a strange adventure which happened to a captain from St. Malo. Mr. du Parquet put the idols into a wooden box and gave them to this captain, without telling him what it was. He gave him [the captain] the order to send the box to the late Duke of Orleans with letters which he also gave him for this Prince. This poor captain, having been unlucky enough to be captured by a frigate out of San Sebastián, was taken to Spain. The

5: Rouse E-4 (no date) 1948 ST13 Callinago ST13 (1650-1700)

When a man died all the relatives examined his body to satisfy themselves that he had not been killed by sorcery. The body was washed, painted, oiled as in life, flexed, and wrapped in a new hammock. It was placed upon a stool in a grave dug in the carbet, near the wall in the case of an ordinary person but in the center if the man were prominent, its eyes were weighted shut, and mats were added to protect it from the soil. The grave was not filled for 10 days, during which the relatives brought food and water to the corpse twice a day and lamented over it. A fire was built around the grave to purify it and to prevent the deceased from catching cold. The deceased's possessions were either cast into this fire or were placed in the grave; sometimes the house was burned too. In prehistoric times a slave or a dog was killed and put in the grave to care for the dead person. If the deceased were a warrior, the chief delivered a funeral oration, extolling his exploits. There was also a feast over the grave, accompanied by dancing. The close relatives fasted and cut their hair in mourning; some time afterward they held a second feast over the grave. In the case of a chief the *Carib* sometimes burned the corpse and mixed its ashes into a drink.

764 [763 754]

WARFARE

The *Carib* posted sentinels near all harbors to watch for the approach of raiding parties. They held assemblies to decide upon war and to fix a rendezvous; at these meetings the old women harangued them on the cruelty of the enemy, the war chief exhorted them to revenge themselves, they became very drunk, and at the height of the festival they ate some enemy flesh, smoked and preserved from the last raid. Each warrior present was given a gourd full of pebbles, a string with knots, or a stick with notches, to tell how many days before he had to be at the rendezvous. He spent the time repairing his pirogue and his weapons, while his wives prepared food for the raid.

721 [711]

The principal *Carib* weapon was the bow and arrow, the former 6 feet (1.8 m.) long, the latter poisoned, occasionally feathered, and provided with a separate barbed point. The poison came from the sap of the manchineel tree; the points were of fishbone, tortoise shell, or fire-hardened wood. There were also javelins and clubs (boutou), the latter engraved and painted with geometric and anthropomorphic designs. These clubs, which varied in length according to the rank of the owner, were used after the supply of arrows had been exhausted (pl. 93).

6411

The *Carib* attempted to catch the enemy asleep in their villages. They attacked at dawn, or at night when there was a full moon. Divided into three bands, they fell upon the village, uttering war cries and shooting fire arrows (having cotton heads).

726

If the enemy resisted successfully, the *Carib* retired at noon, taking with them their dead and wounded. They might re-form for another

5: Rouse E-4 (no date) 1948 ST13 Callinago ST13 (1650-1700)

figures through which the maboya gave oracular answers. There were, 756
however, no household idols or priests, as among the *Arawak*.

The *Carib* often attributed sickness to the influence of sorcerers who 754
had obtained control of maboya. They consulted a shaman to determine the identity of the sorcerer and were usually directed to a woman, from whom no reprisal was to be feared. The woman was made to pick up a shell or a fishbone and to confess that she had administered this in food to cause the disease. She was then tortured and killed.

The shaman was also brought in to effect cures. He worked in the 755
same way as at other séances, setting up a table bearing food offerings and oüicou at one end of the hut and calling his maboya with songs and tobacco smoke. The shaman first asked his maboya whether the disease would be fatal. If so, he abandoned the ceremony and told the patient to prepare for death. If not, the shaman and his maboya approached the patient, touched the part of his body which pained him, sometimes sucking it, and drew out an object—an imaginary poison, thorns, pieces of bone, or splinters of wood and stone. These were supposed to have caused the disease. Then the shaman rubbed the sick person's body with the juice of the *Ginips* fruit, producing a dark brown color. When the patient had [765]
recovered, he gave a feast for the shaman, at the same time providing food offerings for the latter's maboya.

The *Carib* fasted upon a number of occasions: At puberty; when be- 785
coming a chief, a father, or a warrior; after killing an enemy; and at the death of a close relative. A man might also be asked to fast when a relative was sick, in the hope that it might relieve the pain. A typical schedule of fasting has already been described above (p. 557) in connection with the birth of the first child. The people did not vomit for religious purposes, but only to rid their stomachs of an excess of food.

Women knew of certain herbs, fruits, roots, oils, and gums which they 757
used to cure diseases. For indigestion they prepared an infusion from [778]
the bark of the chipou tree and from the *Lambys* shell; they had another drink made by pounding up the bark of certain trees and vines when the sap was thick. If the indigestion had been caused by eating crabs, they ate as an antidote the flesh of the manatee or tortoise, which caused the body to break out into pimples. Then they treated the latter with the juice of the junipa nut or with sap from the leaves of the balisier tree mixed with the ashes of burned seeds. The former was also used to heal wounds. The wives sucked the poison out of snake bites, applied an infusion to the wound, and also prepared a drink as an antidote. They had another antidote for arrow poisoning. Bathing was used to treat some wounds, sweat baths for others. Sometimes they scarified the body to draw off blood.

6: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1938
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157 "shy." Originally it was the name for a kind of crab which, when it cannot escape unobserved, will curl up and remain perfectly still, so that by no amount of scrutiny or poking can it be made to show the least sign of life) undoubtedly has been one of the principal causes for the bolder, more hot-blooded negro's relatively greater success as a lover, and for the increasing proportion of mixed blood in the reserve today. It has, moreover, contributed to the decay and disappearance of language, legend, and custom; and renders doubly difficult today the task of eking out such vestiges of these as still remain.

578 The war feuds of other days have been replaced by a multitude of
[154] petty jealousies and hatreds, but the Caribs still resort to sorcery and piai as instruments of injury and revenge. Though, or perhaps just because, the boutou (war club) of yore has gone forever, that other no less formidable weapon, the tongues of the womenfolk, rages more mercilessly than before. In vain one looks among his present-day descendants for that fierceness which is said to have characterized the Carib of old, earning for him a symbolic association with the Malfini, or Mansfénix hawk.

481 Much has been made of the Indian's custom of walking in single or Indian file, and this is as true today in Dominica as ever or elsewhere; but it seems to be the natural outcome of a habit acquired of necessity on forest trails rather than a racial tradition. More significant, perhaps, is the Indian's peculiarly emphatic, stumpy, forward-falling gait, which, in a manner, is reproduced in his speech, character, and way of life.

484 The Caribs' love of travel, in an island where nine-tenths of the population never move without good reason outside a radius of half a mile from their homes, is perhaps worth mention. Few are the men of the reserve who have not at one time or another visited one or all of the neighboring islands of Guadeloupe, Marie Galante, Martinique—and that with the prospect of no more than a wine or rum debauch if lucky, and a term of imprisonment if caught. Others have left the country for Guiana, Bolivia, or Cuba, as opportunity offered, in search of adventure rather than fortune. Men, women, even children, think nothing of a 35-mile tramp, over mountain track and through virgin forest, to Roseau, the capital, for the sole purpose of selling a few baskets or of buying a few yards of sail cloth or a pound of nails. Their business concluded and their money spent, they will take the homeward road immediately and, if only there be a moon to guide them, march all night through to arrive home by daybreak.

437 Whether cause or effect of poverty, I do not know, but the Indian's
181 proverbial ignorance of the value of money remains as much a fact as his general indifference. In Dominica, at least, he has no other

6: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1938
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On the other hand, Caribs consider the white man's custom of manuring land as disgusting, and would never knowingly eat food so grown. The finding of dung in a provision ground is sufficient reason for abandoning a part or the whole of the cultivation. A serious dispute arose, while I was in the Reserve, because one family accused members of another family of leaving excrement on their land. Perhaps this is one more reason why the Caribs' gardens are so far from their dwellings.

There does not seem to be any hard and fast rule with regard to the division of labor between the sexes, except such as physical fitness dictates. Hunting, fishing, sawing, land clearing, canoe and house building are obviously men's occupations, here as elsewhere. Work on the provision ground is fairly evenly shared. Twine and cords, torches, shark oil, Carib panniers, manioc sifters, and "couleuvres" are made by men usually, though not exclusively. Vegetable oil (palma Christi, known here as "carapat"), open, radial kitchen and garden baskets (corbeilles), the cleaning and (until recently) spinning of cotton, the preparation of farine and cassava bread—except for the grating of the manioc, at which the men often help—and all other household duties are women's work. Although a Carib be returning straight to his house after a fishing expedition, he expects his women folk to meet him on the shore and to carry the fish home. When compelled to carry a load himself, the Carib man always puts it on his shoulder or back, whereas the women have adopted the Creole negro custom of bearing burdens on the head.

River bathing is a daily habit with all Caribs, but once a month the Carib man takes a special kind of bath in the privacy of his own home with water in which certain herbs have soaked. The names of three so used are: the sensitive plant (*Mimosa pudica*), sou marqué (*Cassia bicapsularis*), and kudjuruk (or kugururk—unidentified). The bath must be taken on the night when the moon is new or "good" (that is, for planting), and its object is that of a spiritual antiseptic, said to counteract and defeat the evil effects of possible sorcery or pial directed against the bather during the preceding moon.

A few simple remedies used by the Caribs of Dominica today are, in the case of—

Local inflammation: Half of an ember-baked green papaya applied hot as a poultice.

Internal contusion: The gum of the lowland red gommier (*Bursera gummifera*) as a plaster.

Wounds and cuts: The pounded heart of the kanu tree(?), together with salt. Shark oil and pimento leaves are also used, as is the fat of the Tête-Chien boa.

Flux, or intestinal chill: An infusion of the bark or roots of the wild white guava.

6: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1938
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757 278 Colic: An infusion of the seeds or leaves of the bay tree (Carib, Achuru: *Pimenta acris*).

Debility in women: A concoction made from the tuber called Carib (or red) chalotte (*Cipura* sp.?).

Lack of appetite: Water in which has soaked Cimaruba chips (wild quassia, *Simaroube amara*).

These are straightforward houshold simples. Others partake more of the nature of charms. Of the latter, the best known are: "Surette de montagne," a sweet-smelling vine found only in the depths of the high-woods, and "l'envers caraïbe" (*Maranta indica* sp.?), a rare species of small-leaved native arrowroot (not the ordinary white or red maranta) with reddish leaf stems and tubers that go straight down and are said to intertwine or "plait" themselves. Native tobacco and a stupefying variety of ivy, or caapi, are known, but are not, as far as I could learn, now used. Earth or clay is eaten [261] by some, but the practice is regarded as a vice by the community. On the other hand, many vouch for the good effects of one's own or another's urine, drunk warm, as a cure for poisoning or stomach ache (an emetic?); while others chew the gum of the gommier (*Dacryodes hexandra* and *Icica heptaphylla*) in order to improve their wind." [832] An aphrodisiac, known as "poudre pine tortue" (powdered turtle's penis) is made and sold in the island.

787 "A Carib does not dream for nothing," I was told. He believes his dreams announce or portend grave events affecting himself, his family, or his friends. It certainly is amazing how often such omens prove correct.

753 All serious sickness and death itself are looked upon, not as the ● 754 result of disease or age, but as the works of extra-natural agencies known as piaï. Thus, little confidence is placed in ordinary medical means of restoring health. The Caribs do not fear death, but are terrified at the idea of the hospital, and especially of being separated from their home environment in their last moments.

754 A piaï, to become effective, must be instituted by three persons—usually two men and a woman. The actual harm in any piaï is wrought by spirits who have, so to speak, no personal grievance, but, bullet-like, are merely unleashed and set onto a given person when he or she unwittingly touches some object—such as a stick or branch placed across the path—harmless in itself, but magically dealt with by the piaïmen in order to make it the agency for releasing the piaï. So one may, by good luck or cunning, escape a piaï intended for oneself, or fall, by ill chance, under a piaï intended for somebody else.

"They are taking life tonight," said an old Carib friend of mine the night he died of what I took to be a pleurisy brought on by the enforced wearing of wet clothes. I have often wondered whether he referred to the persons he believed to have bewitched him or to the death spirits themselves. Three years later (two weeks ago as I write now)

6: Taylor E-5 (1930-1937) 1938
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his widow assured me that it was useless for me to try to save their 754
10-year-old daughter, as the child had fallen under the same spell as the father, and had been sick ever since the latter's death. The girl was well grown, but very thin, and had swellings on neck and shoulders. She said her whole body hurt her. At the time I last saw her alive she kept vomiting a light colorless froth, and had a very quick pulse and normal temperature. At her own request I procured eggs and milk for her, and sent for the doctor on my own responsibility. But the message was either distorted or misunderstood, for the doctor neither sent any word nor put in an appearance; and when, 5 days later, the girl died, she was buried without a certificate, as is customary in the reserve. If, as is probable, it was a case of tubercular meningitis, an immediate operation might have saved the child's life.

Death is announced as soon as it takes place by a single protracted 764 [763]
blast of the conque shell (corne lambi). Law and hygiene demand that burial take place within 24 hours (though Labat records having seen the body of a Carib dead several months and perfectly preserved through the use of roucou, *Bixa orellana*), but this is preceded, whenever possible, by a wake to which all and sundry come to make pigs of themselves on the rum provided. When the last "grog" is drunk and the coffin—made on the spot by some of the men present—nailed down, a procession is formed to conduct the corpse to the little cemetery of Sainte Marie, the last home of the last Antilleans. The reading of a French prayer by some old woman more literate than the rest, the tolling of a cracked bell, and the coffin is bestowed in a hastily dug grave almost within reach of the Atlantic waves. Burial in the foetal posture under the floor of the karbé was suppressed by the priests some 70 years ago. The depth of the grave as dug today is supposed to be equal to the length of the body.

Eight days after the burial a sort of second wake is held in the house 765
where the deceased died. In the event of this not having been his or her usual abode, two wakes, or "prières," as they are called, are held. The deathbed is decorated with white flowers, candles, and objects having belonged to the dead man or woman. Until midnight women and girls sit around a table and sing French cantiques, while men and boys wander about, chatting and drinking. Fires are then lighted outside the house and cocoa and cassava bread prepared and offered to those present. At this time the girls usually pair off with the boys and disappear into the bushes, while the older men and women sit round the fire drinking rum and telling tales and conundrums. Sometimes a sort of ronde, or Reigen, is danced around the fire before the dispersal at daybreak. The meaning and object of this ceremony [775]
seems to be a kind of spiritual fumigation to rid the house of the now nefarious spirit of the new dead, which continues to lurk there after burial, as perhaps also of the evil powers that caused the death.

13: Hodge & Taylor
515, 754, 777, 782

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[For information on ritual baths for the purposes of counter-acting sorcery, and giving good luck, see category 789]